

VZCZCXRO1747
PP RUEHCHI RUEHCN RUEHDT RUEHHM
DE RUEHJA #0664 0940040
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 030040Z APR 08
FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8540
INFO RUEHXS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0574
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 2252
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0850
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0845
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

UNCLAS JAKARTA 000664

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP/MTS AND EAP/RSP
DEPT FOR OES/ENRC
NSC FOR CEQ CONNAUGHTON, VAN DYKE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ENRG](#) [SENV](#) [KGHG](#) [ECON](#) [PGOV](#) [ID](#)

SUBJECT: THOMAS FRIEDMAN EXPLORES PRIVATE SECTOR ROLE IN
CONSERVATION IN SUMATRA

REF: JAKARTA 620

¶1. (U) Summary: On a visit to Indonesia in late March to conduct research for his upcoming book, author Thomas Friedman traveled to North Sumatra to look at efforts to protect the environment (reftel). Accompanied by the Ambassador, USAID officers, NGO representatives and the owner of a local energy company, Friedman engaged in extensive discussion of effective approaches to protect Indonesia's forests and promote innovative approaches involving the private sector. As a result, USAID will together with the GOI and NGOs explore the possibility of scaling up ongoing public-private efforts to promote conservation. End Summary.

¶2. (U) On March 24-25, Ambassador Hume, USAID officers, the owner of Medco Energy, Arifin Panigoro, and members of Conservation International, accompanied New York Times Thomas Friedman to visit the Batang Toru region in the Province of North Sumatra. The group viewed the results of a \$1 million USAID grant to Conservation International for the conservation of orangutans and their habitat provided through a congressional earmark. The project has been successful in providing local communities with a heightened awareness of the importance of conservation as well as economic alternatives to illegal logging and deforestation. These measures have halted the activities of the local logging concessionaire and minimized illegal deforestation. Approximately 400 orangutans, or one-tenth of the entire population left on the island of Sumatra, inhabit this area.

¶3. (U) Medco Energy owner Panigoro owns a geothermal concession next to this logging concession, and has committed to purchase these 60,000 hectares to help conserve the orangutans, support long-term community interests and assure that water generated by the forest continues to flow through his geothermal facility. Friedman and his traveling companions discussed at length this contribution and the role of the private sector's potential role in collaborating to conserve forests in Indonesia.

¶4. (U) Friedman was interested in learning from on-the-ground efforts such as this to protect the environment, and in analyzing the possible roles of energy companies, and the private sector in general, for his upcoming book titled QHot, Flat and Crowded.Q At the conclusion of the trip, he

stated that this example provided him exactly what he was interested in for the purposes of his book.

¶5. (U) In part because of this trip and the extensive discussions it stimulated between Friedman and a variety of actors, USAID will explore collaborative efforts between NGOs, the private sector, and the Government of Indonesia to promote conservation, innovations with the private sector and the possibility of taking such efforts to a larger scale.

HUME